

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for translating data in a host response into a format for use by a client, comprising:
 defining at least one pattern expected to occur in the host response;
 detecting a match between the at least one expected pattern and the host response; and
 outputting data of the host response in a format based on the matched pattern to the client.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein defining at least one pattern comprises defining patterns by using a plurality of regular expressions to represent the data of the host response.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein defining at least one pattern comprises using extensible markup language.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein defining at least one pattern comprises using regular expressions to represent the data of the host response.
5. A method of determining an identity of a host response, comprising:
 selecting a file containing at least one pattern expected to occur in the host response;
 detecting a match between the at least one expected pattern and the host response; and
 determining the identity of the host response based on the selected file.
6. A computer-readable storage medium storing a data file comprising:
 at least one data pattern defined using extensible markup language, wherein the at least one data pattern is expressed using a plurality of regular expressions, and wherein the at least one data pattern defines a pattern expected to occur in a host response to a client.
7. A computer executing a host response parser application using the data file of claim 7, wherein the host response parser application selects the at least one data pattern of the data file, compares the selected data pattern with the data of a host response, and when the comparison yields a match, retrieves the matched data from the host response.
8. The computer according to claim 7, wherein the computer further formats the matched data of the host response in accordance with the at least one data pattern.
9. The computer according to claim 7, wherein the computer further returns the matched data to a client unit for display.
10. A host/client interface system, comprising:

at least one host computer;
at least one client computer; and
a host/client interface computer which operates to receive input commands from the client computer, transmit the commands to the at least one host computer, and receive host responses to the command.

11. The host/client interface system of claim 10, wherein the host/client interface computer further operates to translate the input commands into a format usable by the host computer.

12. The host/client interface system of claim 10, wherein the host/client interface computer further operates to retrieve data from the host responses.

13. The host/client interface system of claim 10, wherein the host/client interface computer further operates to format the retrieved data into a form usable by the client computer.

14. The host/client interface system of claim 10, wherein the host/client interface computer further comprises a host response parser, which retrieves the data from the host responses by comparing the host response with an expected data pattern, and when the host response matches the data pattern, retrieves the data from the host response and formats the data according to the matched pattern.

15. The host/client interface system of claim 14, wherein elements of the data pattern are expressed using regular expressions, and the data pattern is expressed using extensible markup language.

16. The host/client interface system of claim 10, wherein the at least one host computer is a host mainframe computer operated by a commercial service provider.

17. The host/client interface system of claim 16, wherein the commercial service provider is at least one of an airline, a car rental agency, a hotel, and a bank.

18. The host/client interface system of claim 10, wherein the at least one client computer comprises at least one of a self-service kiosk, a terminal emulator, or a common language facility client computer.

19. The host/client interface system of claim 18, wherein the self-service kiosk is operated by customers.

20. The host/client interface system of claim 18, wherein the terminal emulator is operated by booking agents for a commercial service provider.

21. The host/client interface system of claim 20, wherein the commercial service provider is at least one of an airline, a car rental agency, a hotel, and a bank.

22. The host/client interface system of claim 10, wherein the host/client interface computer further includes a client manager layer portion, which accepts input from the at least one client computer.

23. The host/client interface system of claim 10, wherein the host/client interface computer further includes a host communications layer portion, which translates client commands into commands understood by the host computer.

24. The host/client interface system of claim 10, wherein the host/client interface computer further comprises a memory which stores the data patterns expected in the host responses.